

General Advancement Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the advancement examination?

An advancement exam provides an unbiased factor for the Final Multiple Score (FMS) algorithm and helps rank-order qualified candidates for advancement consideration. All candidates who take the exam have met necessary requirements for advancement and have been recommended by their CO/OIC.

2. What enlisted exams are administered by the Navy Advancement Center?

Active duty, active Reserve, full-time support and canvasser recruiters take the active duty enlisted advancement exam. Inactive Reserve, including active duty for special work/one-year recall, and those mobilized to active duty under presidential recall or individual ready Reserve (IRR) all take the SELRES enlisted examination.

The exam administration schedules are:

E6 Active duty exams	- First Thursday in March and September
E5 Active duty exams	- Second Thursday in March and September
E4 Active duty exams	- Third Thursday in March and September
E7 Active duty exam	- Third Thursday in January
E4/5/6/7 SELRES Exams	- February and August

Bibliographies for all exams are normally posted six months prior to the exam administration month. Download your bibliography from the Navy Advancement Center's (NAC) Web site on NKO.

3. Am I eligible to take the next advancement exam?

Prior to taking an advancement exam, you must meet all eligibility requirements for the next higher paygrade. You must have met your service in paygrade (SIPG) requirement and have the promotion recommendation of your commanding officer (CO). Check box 45 on your Evaluation Report to see your CO's recommendation for promotion.

Check the SIPG table below to ensure you meet the SIPG requirement. The * denotes a 1-year SIPG waiver for E-6 and E-7 candidates who have been recommended by their CO for early advancement on their last EVAL. Working hard and doing your job can help you earn the EP and advance ahead of schedule.

Chapter 2 of BUPERSINST 1430.16F has specific details on eligibility requirements for advancement. Also, it's critical that your security clearance is up-to-date (if required for your rating) prior to taking the exam; many exams are invalidated due to security clearances. Check with your division Chief Petty Officer (CPO), Command Career Counselor (CCC), or your Educational Services Officer (ESO) to see if you need to meet any additional mandatory requirements prior to taking your exam.

Service in Paygrade (SIPG) Requirements

Paygrade	Service in Paygrade
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E-1 to E-2	-- 9 months
E-2 to E-3	-- 9 months
E-3 to E-4	-- 6 months
E-4 to E-5	--12 months
E-5 to E-6	-- 36 months *
E-6 to E-7	-- 36 months *
E-7 to E-8	-- 36 months
E-8 to E-9	-- 36 months

4. What is an Advancement Worksheet?

Prior to participating in a Navy Wide Advancement Examination (NWAE), all Sailors must verify their advancement worksheet - Advancement in Rate or Change of Rating (Worksheet) NETPDTC 1430/3 (Rev. 06-13) - through their Educational Services Officer (ESO). DO NOT take this lightly. This is YOUR career and you should ensure that you know what you are signing since every point counts. How many of you have missed being selected by less than a point? You can view the form on NKO.

5. How is your PMA calculated?

Your Performance Mark Average (PMA) uses only the Promotion Recommendation block (Block 45) from evaluations in the current paygrade. For E4, your ESO uses evals from the past 8 to 9 months. For E5, the past 14 to 15 months are used, and E6, the past 36 months. Block 45 marks are added together, then divided by the number of evaluations used in the computation.

Promotion Recommendation Point Values

Early Promote	= 4.00
Must Promote	= 3.80
Promotable	= 3.60
Progressing	= 3.40
Significant Problems	= 2.00

Example for PO2 Participating in PO1 Exam:

Evaluation Ending Block 45 Mark

09 March 15 EP	= 4.00
08 March 15 MP	= 3.80
07 March 15 MP	= 3.80

Add 4.00 + 3.80 + 3.80 = 11.6, divide by 3 = 3.866

Round up to 3.87 = PMA

6. Your exam Standard Score (SS) - what does it really mean?

The standard score (SS) is a reflection of how well a candidate did compared to candidate peers taking the same exam. The SS range is 20 to 80. SS changes from exam to exam since the average computations are based on the peer group at the time the particular exam is given.

NOT TRUE: "I scored an 80, so I aced the exam!"

In general, an SS of 80 indicates a candidate scored higher than 99% of the candidates taking the exact same exam (i.e. 99th percentile). A SS of 70 indicates candidate scored higher than 98% of all candidates, 60 indicates 84%, 50 indicates 50%, 40 indicates 16%, 30 indicates 2%, and 20 indicates 1%. It is the SS, not the raw score (number of questions answered correctly) that is a component of the Final Multiple Score (FMS). Lastly -- FMS is how a candidate is advanced with the combination of all elements: exam SS, evals (PMA), awards, education, PNA points and service-in-grade.

7. How are my award points used in my Final Multiple Score?

Awards computed in the E4-E6 Final Multiple Score (FMS) are approved or earned prior to the day of the regularly scheduled examination. Awards with only a month/year date are presumed to have an ending date on the last day of the respective month. Maximum award points authorized for E4/5 candidates is 10 points (max 12 for IA veterans) and 12 points for an E6 (max 14 for IA veterans) . Always make sure your award points are correct on your exam worksheet AND your exam answer sheet. Just one point can make the difference between being advanced and not being advanced due to your FMS.

Current list of awards and their values –

10 Points = Medal of Honor

5 Points = Navy Cross

4 Points = Distinguished Service Medal or Cross, Silver Star Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross

3 Points = Navy and Marine Corps Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal (Strike/Flight), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal

2 Points = Executive Letter of Commendation (max 1), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Gold Life Saving Medal, Navy Reserve Meritorious Service Medal (max 5), Greater than 90 consecutive days of service In Iraq, Afghanistan or the Horn of Africa, (Kuwait, Guantanamo (GTMO), Joint Task Force, 515 (USPACOM) or the Joint Force Special Task Force-Philippines (USPACOM) (Service after 24 October 2001))

1 Point = Letter of Commendation (Flag/Senior Executive Service) (max 2)

8. Pass but Not Advance (PNA) points. I passed the exam but was not advanced. How are PNA points calculated?

PNA (Passed Not Advanced) Points are added to your FMS (E-4/5/6 only) if you pass the test, but are not advanced. PNA Points come from two sources, your exam Standard Score (SS) and your Performance Mark Average (PMA). You can receive up to 1.5 Points each for PMA and SS per exam with a maximum of 3.0 per exam. Only the PNA points from the last 5 exam cycles

are used. PNA Points for Performance Mark Average (PMA) is based on how you rank among your peers. Your PMA must fall within the top 25% of ranked performance averages to garner points. Similarly, PNA Points for Exam Standard Score (SS) is based on all exam scores where your SS must fall in the top 25% in your paygrade/rating to get points.

Performance Mark Average ranking must fall in the Top 25% = 1.5 PNA Points
Exam Standard Score must fall in Top 25% = 1.5 PNA Points (in your rating/paygrade only)

9. Education Points: How do I get credit for my degree toward advancement?

Sailors competing for advancement to paygrades E4 through E6 will be awarded two points for an accredited associate's degree, and four points for an accredited baccalaureate degree or above. Education points will be awarded for the highest degree held, and will increase the total overall Final Multiple Score (FMS) points. Sailors must ensure transcripts with degree information are forwarded directly from their academic institution to the Virtual Education Center, who will validate the transcript and enter education data into the Navy College Management Information System (NCMIS). NCMIS will update your SMART and the Navy Enlisted Advancement System (NEAS) to be used to calculate the E4-E6 FMS.

Commanding Officer
Center for Personal and Professional Development
Attn: Virtual Education Center
1905 Regulus Avenue, Ste. 234
Virginia Beach, VA 23461-2009

To allow sufficient time for the Virtual Education Center to process all documents, transcripts for Sailors competing for advancement to E4-E6 MUST be received no later than the first day of the month in which their advancement exam occurs. (i.e. Active Duty = 1 Mar and 1 Sep, SELRES = 1 Feb and 1 Aug).

10. "Whole Person Concept" - it's not just your exam scores that get you advanced, it's your Final Multiple Score (FMS).

The FMS is a "Whole Person Concept" approach that considers your exam score along with other factors to ensure the right Sailors are advanced. The other factors considered for E4/5/6 are Performance Mark Average (how well you perform in your job and as a Sailor), Service in Paygrade (experience in your job), Awards (your accomplishments in your job and as a Sailor), Education Points (self-improvement through education (accredited college degrees), and PNA points (credit for doing great on previous exam cycles but not enough quotas available). For those who are CPO board eligible, the FMS is computed using Performance Mark Average and rating exam score only.

What is your advancement "opportunity?" The quota for each rating - percentage of Sailors that have an opportunity to advance each cycle - is the most important advancement factor. Some ratings have limited quotas, so the Navy works hard to advance the most qualified Sailors using the Whole Person Concept.

11. The NAC rank-orders Sailors for advancement. What does that mean?

NAC uses the results from enlisted exams to assess knowledge at the next-higher paygrade and compute an individual Sailor's Final Multiple Score (FMS). The FMS is used to compare all

Sailors in the same pay grade and rating. NAC rank-orders Sailors - the highest FMS score is the number one Sailor for advancement, second highest is number two, etc. - so the most qualified candidates are advanced given the number of vacancies (quotas) in a particular rating. The FMS is made up of different variables, but it's key to remember that sustained superior performance is the primary factor for advancement.

12. Your Profile Sheet - How did you do compared to your peers?

Advancement exam profile sheets are created for every Sailor participating for advancement, and they provide a wealth of information. An individual profile sheet shows the Final Multiple Score (FMS), the overall score breakdown, the final multiple required for advancement, the average FMS by section for Sailors advanced in rate, any PNA points earned from previous exams, and any PNA points that were earned from the current exam. Profile sheets also show your exam score breakdown by section including the topics, the number of questions for that topic, how many you got right, the percentile, and your status (results).

Once exam results are published, you can access your own profile sheet on the Navy Advancement Center's (NAC) Web site on NKO to view and print, or your ESO can access at the NEAS Web site (a CAC card log in is required at each site). Profile sheets are available on line for two years.

13. Does the Profile Sheet tell me how many questions I got correct in each section?

Yes. The profile sheet tells you the number of questions in each examination section and the number of questions you answered correctly in each section. It also gives you a percentile which reflects how well you did in each examination section in relation to your peers who took the exact same examination.

For example: A percentile of 80% indicates that you scored higher than 80% of the candidates answering questions in the section. Percentile is not the same as percent. Percentile reflects relative standing in a peer group. Percent just gives what proportion of the items was answered correctly.

14. My Profile Sheet says DISC. What does this mean?

DISC means there is a Discrepancy with your advancement information and your Final Multiple cannot be calculated until this error is corrected through your ESO and the Navy Advancement Center (NAC) with supporting documentation. An uncleared discrepancy can keep an otherwise qualified Sailor from being advanced.

The most common discrepancies are –

Performance Mark Error - this means that your Performance Mark Average is missing from your exam answer sheet. This is the number one discrepancy.

Insufficient Time in Rate - this means that your time in rate is less than the required needed for the next paygrade and your PMA does not reflect a 4.00 (EP).

Unmatched Name/SSN - this means that your Name/SSN (the DOD ID Number has replaced the SSN) does not match the Enlisted Master File (EMF) created from the Navy Enlisted System (NES).

Wrong Path of Advancement - this means that the exam in the rating you took did not match your current rating. (i.e. - a BM3 took a MA2 exam)

School Required - this means that your answer sheet did not indicate an "A" or "C" school and the rating exam's prerequisite requires an "A" or "C" school completion.

15. What is the most common exam discrepancy for Reservists?

The number one discrepancy for advancement eligible Reservists is a Performance Mark Average calculation error; your ESO should be able to correctly calculate for each exam cycle. Also, the NAC sees SSN and name errors on exam sheets - this error falls directly on the member for correction when filling out the exam sheets. Finally, some Reservists get a WPA error - Wrong Path of Advancement. Why is that?

When a Reserve member is on Active Duty, information is often taken out of NSIPS/IMAPMAS. This can easily be corrected without any action required by the NAC, but commands must make the NSIPS/IMAPMSA correction locally.

NSIPS must be correct before a member in the Reserves takes the exam. Check with your ESO to make sure your information is up to date!

16. E8/E9 Eligibility Profile Sheets.

All advancement-eligible Chiefs and Senior Chiefs should check their Profile Sheets on the Navy Advancement Center's (NAC) Web site on NKO or contact your ESO who accesses your information from the NEASOS Web site - <https://neasos.cnet.navy.mil>. After you verify your eligibility you should ensure your record is up to date by using the Web Enabled Record Review (WERR) on BOL. WERR allows you to view documents that have been submitted, reviewed and accepted as a part of your official military personnel file.

17. Why do I need a CAC to view my profile sheet?

Much of the information included on the NAC's NKO portal includes Personally Identifiable Information (PII). DoD policy clearly states CAC login is required when systems contain PII. Profile sheets are developed, maintained and linked to the Navy Enlisted Advancement System, and contain PII on individual Sailors. You can access much of the information on the NAC's NKO portal through your login/password (no CAC required).

18. I took a late exam, when will it be scored?

Once NAC receives your late exam answer sheet from your ESO, it is scanned and scored. A profile sheet with your results is created and posted on the NEASOS for the command's view, and on the NAC site for the individual sailor's view the following day.

19. Does it hurt to know how you did on the last exam when you are planning your exam study?

Not a bit. Exam writers test the major subject matter of their ratings. Major subject matter (shown as sections on the profile forms) will reappear from time to time. But not the same questions! Use past profile information as just another piece of information to help you organize your study plan. But don't get trapped into thinking the profile form provides the questions or answers. It doesn't.

20. Why haven't the results come out yet?

After an advancement exam is administered, Sailors wait patiently for the results. We've noticed on this forum that many continue to ask when the E4/E5/E6 results will be released. That information is not available to the NAC, but rather depends on a process that includes Fleet ESOs and Navy manpower commands. There are seven primary steps that lead to exam results.

Here is a basic snapshot of the process from exam administration to release of results:

1. Exams are administered
2. Fleet and shore ESOs mail answer sheets to Pensacola - historically, this process step takes six to seven weeks because substitute exams must also be counted and returned
3. Before exams can be scored, 95% of the projected exam answer sheets have to be received from the Fleet to ensure that the Navy doesn't over promote (this includes late exams)
4. NAC then sends a listing of how many test passers are in each rating to the CNO
5. Enlisted Community Managers (ECMs) and manpower authorities determine vacancies and funding available
6. Quotas are approved by CNP and forwarded to NAC
7. Final Multiple Score (FMS) cut lines are set and published results are immediately sent to the Fleet

21. How does the Navy figure out what records to send to E7 selection board for consideration?

PO1s who are eligible to advance to Chief Petty Officer are rank-ordered against peers with only two Final Multiple Score (FMS) elements: 1) the candidate's performance mark average, and 2) their exam standard score (SS). Each candidate's FMS is rank-ordered against all other E7 advancement-eligible candidates in the same rating. Those who have an FMS that falls in the top 60 percent will be selection board eligible (SBE). The records of all candidates who have an FMS that falls in the bottom 40 percent (in each rating) will not be forwarded to the board for consideration. Under the new FMS formula outlined in NAVADMIN 114/14, the performance metric (evaluations) are 60% of the E7 FMS, and the exam SS is 40%. E7 exam bibliographies are posted and available on the Navy Advancement Center's (NAC) Web site on NKO.

22. How can I track the advancement opportunity for my enlisted rate?

The Navy Advancement Center (NAC) posts the past three years of FTS and Active Duty advancement results on the Navy Advancement Center's (NAC) Web site on NKO under Exam Statistics By Rate.

The data is displayed with the following fields:

ERATE - Enlisted rating
GRP - Advancement numbers broken out within a specific rating
TOTAL - Number of candidates for exam cycle
ADV - Number of candidates advanced
ADV % - Percentage of candidates advanced
PNA - Number of candidates that passed the exam, but did not advance
ADV PNA % - Percentage of candidates that passed the exam, but did not advance
FAIL - Number of candidates that failed the exam
FAIL % - Percentage of candidates that failed the exam
DISC - Number of disqualified candidates
DISC % - Percentage of disqualified candidates
ADV SS - The average exam standard score

23. Advancement Pay Determination - I just got advanced off the last exam, when am I getting paid?

The CNO provides monthly pay increment quotas. These quotas are uploaded into the Navy Enlisted Advancement System (NEAS) and spread across all ratings by pay grade. Selectees are advanced by Final Multiple Score, not exam Standard Score (SS) for (E4/5/6). Selection Board advancement is by seniority ranking (E7/8/9) by rating. Once your pay date is determined, your Profile Sheet will be updated with the actual date of advancement. If your profile sheet status says SELECTEE, then you are not getting paid that month. Check it again the first week of the next month.

Sailors selected for advancement to E4, E5 and E6 advance at a rate phased at no less than 3% per month for the first five months of the six-month pay increment. The majority of Sailors will advance in the final month of the advancement cycle.

The pay increments for each exam cycle are as follows –

JAN (Active) and FEB (SELRES) E7 has 12 pay increments - Sep (current year) through Aug (following year)

FEB (SELRES) and MAR (Active) E4/5/6 has 6 increments - Jul (current year) through Dec (current year)

AUG (SELRES) and SEP (Active) E4/5/6 has 6 increments - Jan (following year) through Jun (following year)

NOV (Active and SELRES) E8/9 has 12 increments - Jul (current year) through Jun (following year)

24. What is pay increment difference between E4-E6 and E7-E9?

The results from E7, E8 and E9 boards are completed once a year, so unlike the E6 and below results that are released in two six-month cycles, no less than 3% of the new Chiefs, Senior Chiefs and Master Chiefs are advanced per month for the first eleven months of a cycle. In the final month, all remaining selectees are advanced. Pay increments for E7 selectees are from September through August. E8 and E9 are advanced from July through June.

25. Advancement Exams and IA Deployments - I was on an IA and missed an exam. What do I need to do?

If you missed the exam while you were in an IA status, the first thing you need to do is contact your ESO and take the next available exam. When your ESO sends that exam to be scored, they will also send in an exam worksheet for the exam missed that includes what your PMA, awards and SIPG would have been if you had taken that exam. Your FMS from the exam taken is not used to compare with the Final Multiple required of the exam missed. To recalculate your FMS for the missed exam, the Navy Advancement Center (NAC) takes the standard score of the exam you took, the PMA, awards and SIPG from the missed exam worksheet and recalculates your FMS for the exam missed. If that FMS equals or exceeds the Final Multiple required for the exam missed, you will be advanced off that exam. If not, you may receive PNA points. A new profile sheet will be created for the exam missed for you to view and print at the Navy Advancement Center's (NAC) Web site on NKO.

26. Selection Board Eligible (SBE) Criteria for candidates serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and HOA

NAVADMIN 336/07 establishes criteria for E7/LDO candidates in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa who may be waived from participation in the CPO advancement exam. Although Sailors may be waived from taking the CPO exam, they ARE NOT automatically Selection Board Eligible (SBE). SBE waiver validation must be completed by the eligible Sailor's permanent command using a validation answer sheet transmittal letter. Refer to NAVADMIN 336/07 and the Advancement Manual, Chapter 6 for additional information and specific requirements.

Sailors who do not have a valid profile sheet for the Active or Reserve CPO selection board are not SBE. A candidate may verify their selection board eligibility on the Navy Advancement Center's (NAC) Web site on NKO. Failure to comply with established policy and procedures will result in a missed advancement opportunity.

27. What are the exam content and scoring differences between active duty and reserve personnel?

None, both Active Duty and SELRES have similar exam content and are scored the same. Reserve personnel are required to have the same knowledge as their active duty counterparts. The only difference is the advancement opportunity or quota. CNO provides quotas for active duty and CNRF provides quotas for SELRES.

28. What number of questions answered wrong will result in failing an exam?

To pass the advancement exam, you will need to have a raw score (number of correctly answered questions) of at least 49 for E4, 55 for E5 and 61 for E6 and E7. Currently, all enlisted advancement exams have 175 questions.

29. I am taking the advancement exam for the next higher paygrade. What should I do to improve my chances for advancement?

Your advancement opportunity is based on two primary factors; first is your individual Final Multiple Score (FMS) and next is number of vacancies which create quotas. Every rating has different quotas and advancement opportunity. Recommend you review Exam Stats by Cycle to

determine and review how your rating has performed historically. The Navy Advancement Center (NAC) uses the FMS to rank-order Sailors to fill available quotas in each rate.

The advancement exam is only one part of the FMS, but Sailors have the opportunity to increase their advancement opportunity by scoring higher than their peers taking the same exam (see note "What is the standard score? How is it determined?"). Mastery of the exam comes down to how well you know your job. Learn as much as you can about your rating from all sources. Study the references listed in your bibliography. Bibliographies are exam-specific, so be sure to download and review the material listed for the correct cycle.

Bottom line, the two primary things you can do to get advanced are to maintain stellar performance on the job and know your job well enough to score higher than your peers on advancement exams.

30. What will my advancement opportunity be next cycle?

Quotas are the total number of test-takers who will be advanced. Quotas, or vacancies, within each rating community and paygrade are determined by the Chief of Naval Personnel and Enlisted Community Managers.

Advancement opportunity and career progression are directly linked to a rating's manning level. Personnel in undermanned ratings have greater opportunities for advancement than those in over-manned ratings.

31. If I have done all that and still get only PNA points, what is the problem?

Advancements fill vacancies. Advancements, especially in the higher grades, can seem very slow. You must remember that when there are few or no vacancies, there are few or no advancements. It's a vacancy driven system; advancement cut off scores are different for every test.

32. When questions are deleted from an exam, how does this affect my score?

It doesn't. Everyone in the competitive group takes the same exam, so all are affected equally. Deleted questions do not enhance or detract from anyone's advancement opportunity.